

Hi my name is _____ my pronouns are _____ and this is the 8th principle minute. With the adoption of the 8th Principle, our congregation committed to dismantle racism, beginning within our walls.

Twelve score and five years ago thirteen colonies declared their independence from Great Britain. In doing so they clearly stated ideals that were omitted from the Constitution just thirteen years later. We find ourselves still struggling to see that equality is ensured for all.

In 1852 Frederick Douglass asked “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” He followed by stating “The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me.” Here we are, in 2021, and this concern still remains paramount for marginalized communities. Two centuries of inequitable access to the benefits of society have resulted in a caste system that is based largely on race and gender. Heteronormative power systems still hold sway.

So how do we celebrate Independence Day, knowing that the greatness of our country is an unrealized promise for so many? In the view of David Oliver from USA Today, “it’s OK to not celebrate, but maybe there’s room to meet in... [the] middle.” We can celebrate the promise, if we commit to working for improvement. We can take the time to reflect on what we can do to ensure that all people are members of a single beloved community. We can celebrate family, community, and friends as a way to remain energized in our continuing fight for equity and compassion.

Together we will continue this journey toward spiritual wholeness, build a beloved community, educate ourselves and discuss what it means to develop a culture of being accountably anti-racist. We will continue to look at our own practices, identity, and stories with a new lens to dismantle the racism in ourselves and our institutions.